

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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BAUER ON STATE OF THE STATE: LOTS OF PROMISES, BUT WHERE ARE THE DETAILS?

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Mitch Daniels used his 2006 State of the State speech to make a lot of promises about Indiana's future, but Indiana House Democrat Leader B. Patrick Bauer from South Bend warned Hoosiers that the governor's record demonstrates his words must be taken with a huge grain of salt.

"Indiana has lost 7,000 jobs since Mitch Daniels took office," Bauer said. "Since his number one job as our state's chief executive is creating jobs, where are the benefits he promised? Rather than creating jobs, this governor has appeared to focus on laying off workers and sending their jobs out of state and overseas."

Bauer said there were ample reasons to worry about many of the programs announced in the governor's speech.

"We agree that we must improve Indiana's infrastructure, which is why we supported the program of Garvee bonding that will enable the state to use future federal proceeds to float bonds for major highway and bridge projects," Bauer said. "We are not yet willing to commit to a program that sells the Indiana Toll Road to private investors, mostly from foreign countries, and we are not in favor of a program that will lead to large toll increases. We also are worried that this administration will use the power of eminent domain – especially in the Interstate 69 project – to take private property from one owner and give it to another."

"Always remember that private investors are in business to make a profit," he added. "If they cannot make a profit, they will look to increase fees or lay off personnel. In a state where 7,000 people have lost their jobs over the past year, I do not believe we should be advancing proposals that will put more Hoosiers out of work."

Bauer said House Democrats agree with the governor that money needs to go into Indiana's classrooms, but he wished the administration had demonstrated the same commitment last year when it championed the passage of a state budget that cut state support for many school corporations statewide.

"Last year, the governor slashed dollars that were going to the classroom," Bauer noted. "What has he done to fix that problem? We have yet to hear his solution."

Bauer said that House Democrats will be looking forward to seeing more details about these proposals, and working to make sure they do not contain unpleasant surprises.

"Remember that the governor promised many things in 2005: a balanced budget, moving our state into the Central Time Zone and putting Indiana first," Bauer said. "He gave us a budget that socked property taxpayers to the tune of \$1 billion, cuts in funding for schools, active opposition to Central Time, and an effort to sell state facilities and programs to the highest bidders from outside Indiana."

"With those 'accomplishments' in mind, the people of Indiana have the right to be leery of the promises this governor makes, because those promises may end up costing us even more in taxes and reduced services," he added. "Indiana House Democrats want the people of this state to know that we will do everything in our power to make sure their interests are protected."